

On View

Rejoice & Be Glad In It
Tissue Ink Monoprint
2008
Courtesy of the Artist

Blood of Our Ancestors
Tissue Ink Monoprint
2007
Courtesy of the Artist

*The Language We Laugh In-
The Language We Cry In*
Tissue Ink Monoprint
2008
Courtesy of Molefi and
Ana Asante

Free Your Mind
Tissue Ink Mono/Photo Print
2008
Courtesy of the Artist

The Beauty of Now
Tissue Ink Mono/Photo Print
2008
Courtesy of the Artist

Cute
Tissue Ink Mono/Photo Print
2008
Courtesy of the Artist

Never Stop Dreaming
Tissue Ink Mono/Photo Print
2008
Courtesy of Joseph Jordan

Peace-is
Site specific installation
Tissue paper
2009
Courtesy of the Artist



The Beauty of Now Maya Freelon Asante May 13 - August 16, 2009



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830 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202 (443)263-1800

Cover: Detail, *Rejoice & Be Glad In It* (Courtesy of the Artist)
Inside flap: Detail, *The Language We Laugh In-The Language We Cry In*
(Courtesy of Joseph Jordan)
Inside: *The Beauty of Now* (Courtesy of the Artist)
Maya Freelon Asante (Photograph by Ryan Joseph)

*The Beauty of
Now*



Maya Freelon Asante
May 13 - August 16, 2009



The Beauty of Now

Maya Freelon Asante is a dynamic young artist working in an unusual medium: tissue paper. Having found an old, water-damaged piece of tissue paper in her grandmother's basement, the artist marveled at its intricate beauty—the vivid colors morphing into a curious rainbow of times past. Seeking to replicate this poetic effect, Freelon Asante experimented with the medium to create new forms such as her tissue sculptures and tissue-ink monoprints and photoprints. Though seemingly fragile, tissue paper has been a most apt medium for the themes Freelon Asante engages: ancestral memory, family history, and the resilience of the human spirit.

For her monoprints, Freelon Asante harnesses color from one source to saturate the surface of another. Likewise, the photoprints borrow old photographs of family members or historical figures to create a visual lineage of personal and collective resistance. Using water to force the tissue paper's colors to run, Freelon Asante calls attention to water as a vehicle for movement and dispersal. However, the tissue paper, despite its prolonged exposure to water as well as to light, heat, and a variety of other elements, displays an amazing endurance and resilience, much like the people and stories in the artist's work.

With their fragmented shapes and shifting colors, Freelon Asante's images could have a precedent in works by Alma Thomas or Frank Bowling, other black artists who span between purely abstracted modes of geometric, color-school painting and luminous canvases awash with texture and figures. Yet, Freelon Asante's tissue-paper art speaks a reverential language of its own. By thrusting old color and images across thresholds of time and space, Freelon Asante honors the power of *then* with the beauty of *now*.



Artist Statement

As an "artist," I contemplate global issues of war, poverty, waste, ageing, and beauty, searching for what fuels our desire to preserve or protect. Giving reverence to my ancestors and meditating on the beauty of now, my art represents the freedom to create challenging work with an

objective of universal peace and understanding. The peace starts with the community in which I'm sharing my work; interaction is ever-present and essential.

Over the past four years I have worked with "bleeding" tissue paper, witnessing its deterioration—in and out of water, ripped and pieced back together, thrown, stepped on, forgotten and remembered. Independently, a torn piece of paper seems like a scrap of trash, but once unified with others, the force is overwhelming. Reflecting on the beauty and diversity of the African diaspora, my Tissue Paper Sculptures scale the wall and demand attention. Similarly, my Tissue Ink Monoprints and Mono/Photo Prints bear ink stains from the tissue paper; like colorful flood marks, the prints are a memory of something that once was.

Biography

After graduating from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 2007, Freelon Asante taught at Morgan State University and Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she currently resides. She has held residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and Brandywine Workshop.